



Senator Feinstein Urges Moratorium on Ports Deal

February 22, 2006

San Francisco – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today urged a moratorium on the Bush Administration's authorization of an agreement in which Dubai Ports World, a company controlled by the United Arab Emirates government, would take over operations at six major U.S. ports. The following is a statement by Senator Feinstein:

"I will support legislation to place a moratorium on the Dubai Ports World agreement so that Congress can conduct a more comprehensive review. I am especially concerned by the secrecy in which the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States conducted its analysis. We do not know what issues were considered by this committee nor whether our national security interests were well served by the decision to allow the deal to go ahead.

Much more needs to be done by the United States to help secure our seaports. Each year, approximately 13 million shipping containers enter U.S. ports, including six million from overseas. Despite this high volume of cargo, only five percent of the containers are inspected.

As part of this effort, I have been working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass legislation making our ports safer. The resulting legislation, the 'Reducing Crime At America's Seaports Act of 2005,' was unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee last year.

A compromise version of the bill is now included in the USA-Patriot Act reauthorization conference report, which will likely be passed into law next week. What this legislation does is to bolster the criminal laws governing our nation's ports, bringing them in line with the realities of the threats posed by terrorists and others seeking to do our nation harm.

But let there be no doubt: much more needs to be done. This includes increasing inspections of containers, improving intelligence, providing federal funding based on risk, and bolstering the physical security of our ports."